

## Disappointments of the 2006 Session

### Eminent Domain

One of the most disappointing aspects of this year’s session was the failure of the General Assembly to act on the issue of eminent domain. Judicial expansion of our eminent domain laws so that private developers can make more money is a very disturbing and dangerous proposition, and walks all over the basic right of every American to own property. What’s even more troubling is that the Supreme Court decision of last year that allowed for eminent domain for economic development purposes was based on a case right here in Connecticut. The *Kelo vs. New London* decision poses a monumental threat to homeowners everywhere in that it allows any city or town to take individual homes away from people and turn them over to private developers as long as the government does it in the name of the “public good.” This is wrong and is why I, along with my Republican colleagues, supported legislation that would have prohibited the seizure of homes for economic development. Unfortunately, measures that have been brought up have failed mainly along party lines. It is my belief that, as legislators, one of our most important responsibilities is to protect the rights of homeowners, and it is something I will continue to fight for.

### Sex Offender Legislation

After pressure from Senate Republicans, the State Senate unanimously passed stronger penalties for pedophiles who sexually assault children. The bill created mandatory sentences of 25 years in prison for a first time offense and life imprisonment for a second offense for persons convicted of first degree, second degree and aggravated sexual assault of a child under age 13, as well as for promoting prostitution of a minor. The bill was patterned after Florida’s “Jessica’s Law,” which was passed in response to the kidnapping and killing of 9 year old Jessica Lunsford by a released pedophile. Sadly, the measure was never taken up in the House of Representatives.



Senator Cappiello speaking at a Senate Republican press conference

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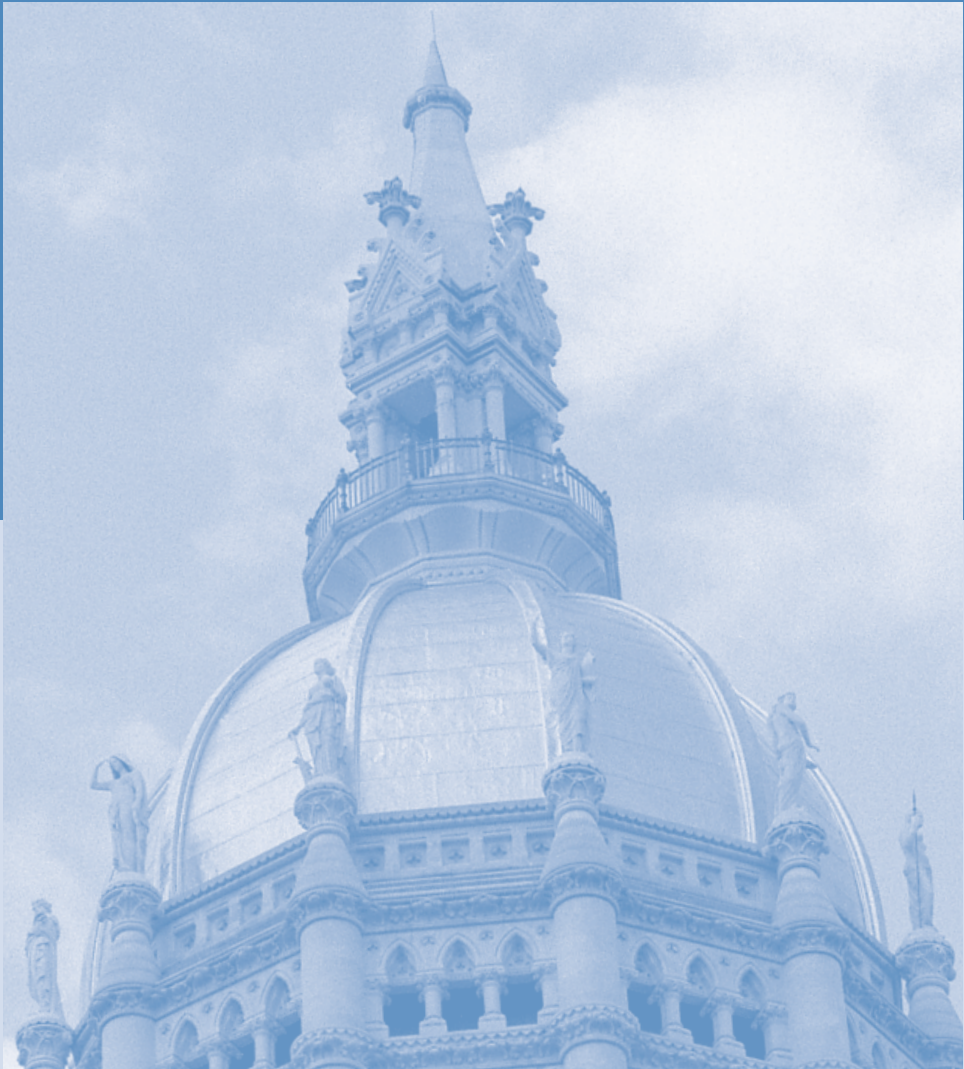
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2006 Legislative Report to the 24th District

## State Senator David J. Cappiello



Serving the people of:

Bethel

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State Senator

# David J. Cappiello

Dear Neighbor,

The 2006 session of the Connecticut General Assembly has concluded. The session, which went from February to May, was short in duration. While there are some who may want to use this as an excuse as to why certain matters weren't brought up for discussion this year, such as eminent domain and creating harsher penalties for sex offenders, there was more than enough time to address matters of importance to Connecticut residents. The decisions by majority leaders of the House and Senate not to take up these issues are what prohibited these bills from going forward.

The good news is that the legislature did finish its business on time with an adjusted state budget in place. The bad news is that some of the more vital issues facing our state were left on the table.

Please take a moment to read about some of the important measures that were and were NOT addressed in 2006. You can also visit my website at [www.senaterepublicans.ct.gov](http://www.senaterepublicans.ct.gov) for events taking place at the Capitol.

If you have any specific questions regarding these issues or any other issue concerning state government, please feel free to call my office at 1-800-842-1421, e-mail me at [David.Cappiello@cga.ct.gov](mailto:David.Cappiello@cga.ct.gov) or write to me at: Senator David J. Cappiello, Legislative Office Building, Room 3400, Hartford, CT 06106.

Sincerely,

David

Senator David Cappiello



## Budget

Under the strong leadership of Governor M. Jodi Rell, the legislature this year adopted a \$16.07 billion state budget. As ranking member of the Appropriations Committee, I worked hard to keep spending and tax increases in check. While the budget includes a modest increase in state spending, it also provides tax relief for individuals, businesses and municipalities. Considering that the budget bill passed by the Appropriations Committee earlier in the session would have left us with a \$1.2 billion hole (a measure Republicans fought tooth and nail against), this budget was a good compromise.

The 2007 adjusted state budget provides an additional \$115 million for municipalities across the state this year, which includes a one time \$33 million grant. The four towns of the 24th Senatorial District will receive an additional \$928,836 under the state's statutory grant formula.

The budget calls for \$190 million to be placed into the state's Rainy Day Fund and for \$20 million in additional funding for Special Education. All in all, this budget does good things and it does them in a responsible manner.

## Taxes

The adjusted state budget reduces taxes in Connecticut by \$123 million in 2007. I am pleased to report that the property tax credit that currently stands at \$350 will be restored to \$500 beginning with the 2006 income tax year.

In an effort to create and maintain quality jobs in our state, the legislature has made a series of tax changes that affect businesses, including the repeal of the 15% corporate surcharge for the 2007 income year. Additionally, several new pro-business tax credits were created.

1. Job Creation Tax Credit – Businesses that create at least 50 new jobs would be eligible for a credit equal to 25% of the estimated withholding tax per new employee for up to five years.
2. A phase out of the property tax on all manufacturing machinery and equipment (MME) over the next five years.
3. Displaced Worker Tax Credit – A business credit of \$1,500 for each displaced (laid off) worker the company hires.
4. Film Industry Tax Credit – A credit equal to 30% of in-state production costs.



Senator Cappiello with students from New Fairfield High School visiting the State Capitol

## Henry Abbott Technical High School

In June, Governor Rell came to Danbury to break ground on a \$54 million renovation project to the Henry D. Abbott Technical High School. As one of the first magnet schools in the state, the renovation of the 50 year old Abbott Tech will include an addition of over 116,000 square feet to the facility, an entire new wing, new sports facilities and classroom space.

Abbott Tech draws students from all areas of our region. Scheduled to be completed in 2008, this renovation project not only will allow the school to be able to accommodate more students, but it will also create state-of-the-art advanced technical training for students in a variety of trades from culinary arts to automotive repair.

## WestConn

Western Connecticut State University will soon be home to a brand new 169,000 square foot fine arts center. Over the past three years, the legislature has authorized over \$80 million in funding for costs associated with the design and construction of the new center to be located on the Westside campus.

Current space for the performing arts is outdated and inadequate and fails to meet the needs of the University. The new facility will provide performance space, including an 800-seat concert hall, theater, recital hall, classroom space and art space. The project, which is scheduled to be completed by 2011, would allow WestConn to serve many more students in the disciplines of art and music.

## Teachers' Retirement Fund

For the past four years I have been a sponsor of legislation that would require a constitutional amendment to fully fund the state's Teachers' Retirement Fund (TRF), and 2006 was no different. Currently, due to years of under funding by the General Assembly, the teachers' pension system has a shortfall of approximately \$5.3 billion. Unfortunately, the measure was never taken up even though there were over 80 co-sponsors to the legislation.

There is some good news however. Under this year's budget, \$246 million of state surplus money is being directly deposited into the pension fund to fully cover the costs of the system for both FYs 06 and 07. Fully funding the TRF in this manner stops the bleeding for two years. Considering that the TRF has been fully funded only one time in its entire history, it is my hope that this is an indication that we are headed in the right direction.